



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR NATIONAL LGBTQ+ SPORTING INCLUSION AWARDS

The finalists for the 2025 Australian Pride in Sport Awards have been announced ahead of a spectacular ceremony set to take place in Melbourne on 16 April. Now in its eighth year, the event will bring together sporting identities, clubs, and codes from across the country to celebrate LGBTQ+ inclusion in Australian sport over the past year.

First held in 2018, the Australian Pride in Sport Awards is the first event of its kind dedicated solely to recognising outstanding efforts in making sport more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people. It is produced by Pride in Sport, the national not-for-profit sporting inclusion program led by Australia's largest LGBTQ+ health organisation, ACON.

This year, the Australian Pride in Sport Awards will be hosted by ABC presenter Patricia Karvelas. A respected journalist and broadcaster, Karvelas is a prominent voice in Australian media, known for her insightful political commentary and advocacy on social issues.

Returning to CENTREPIECE at Melbourne Park, the event will include dinner, drinks, and the highly anticipated awards ceremony. Attendees will also enjoy entertainment from recording artist, *'The Voice'* finalist and stage star, Stellar Perry.

A key event on the LGBTQ+ sporting calendar, the Australian Pride in Sport Awards honour athletes, employees, volunteers, and organisations while showcasing the results of the Pride in Sport Index (PSI) – the national benchmarking instrument used to assess LGBTQ+ inclusion within Australian sport.

The awards will feature prominent sporting and community figures, including Pride in Sport patrons, World Cup and Ashes-winning cricket captain Alex Blackwell and NRL legend and trailblazer Ian Roberts. Funds raised from the event will support initiatives aimed at making Australian sport more inclusive for LGBTQ+ communities.

Pride in Sport National Program Manager, Beau Newell, said: "We know that LGBTQ+ people are less likely to participate in sport. At the same time sporting organisations want to see any many people as possible to enjoy playing sport."

"The PSI enables sporting organisations and clubs across Australia to evaluate and enhance their efforts to include LGBTQ+ people. The Australian Pride in Sport Awards acknowledge and celebrate people and organisations leading the way in fostering safer and more inclusive sporting environments. These awards shine a light on the incredible individuals and organisations that are making sport a place where everyone belongs, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

"All of these finalists are doing practical work to make members of the LGBTQ+ community feel welcome and valued. They are inspiration for everyone building a community that includes everyone."

Newell added: "As the PSI and Awards continue to grow, we are seeing a broader and more diverse range of sports organisations committing to inclusion, reinforcing the message that sport is for everyone. We have seen firsthand the positive change that can come from fostering inclusive sporting environments, and these awards are a testament to the dedication and passion of those working tirelessly to make this happen."

The 2025 Australian Pride in Sport Awards is on Wednesday 16 April 2025, 6pm – 10pm at CENTREPIECE at Melbourne Park, Olympic Blvd, Melbourne. For more information, [click here](#).

ENDS



2025 PRIDE IN SPORT AWARDS FINALISTS

Executive Leadership Award

- Andrew Bondini, Spectres Australia Basketball
- Pete Boyle, Macquarie University Sport
- Kate Davies, Netball Queensland & QLD Firebirds
- Daniel Lawler, Adelaide University Sport
- Kate Nuttall, Tennis Australia

Inclusive Coach of the Year

- Cory Bartlett, Ballarat Roller Derby
- Amelia Catt, Australian Sailing
- Pete Hammond, Sydney Convicts Rugby Club
- Christine MacLaren, Rowing Australia
- Georgia Verry, Conscious Combat Club

LGBTQ+ Ally of the Year

- Ben Dew, Tennis Australia
- Melissa Gmeiner, Rugby Australia
- Paul Heptonstall, National Rugby League
- Natalie Jacques, Gymnastics NSW
- Kristina Mitsikas, UWA Sport

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Innovation Award

- AFL Queensland Pride Round, Australian Football League
- Colour the Campus "Wear it Purple Day", Macquarie University Sport
- NSW Pride, Hockey NSW
- Play with Pride Brunch, Adelaide University Sport & Fitness
- Trans Participation and Barriers in Sport and Fitness, The University of Sydney, New South Wales Ministry of Health Drug and Alcohol Services, and Trans Health Research Group University of Melbourne
- UWA Sport LGBTQ+ Allyship in Sport Program, UWA Sport

LGBTQ+ Role Model of the Year

- Nikki Ayers OAM PLY, Rowing Australia
- Julie (Jae) Charlton OAM, Wheelchair Sports NSW/ACT
- Rowen D'Souza, Gay & Lesbian Tennis Alliance
- Isaac Humphries, Adelaide 36ers & National Basketball League
- Tyler Juel, Tennis NSW
- Kalinda Robinson, AusCycling

Positive Media Award

- AJ Lamarque: 'Pride Basketball Australia Ambassadorship', Basketball NSW & Spectres Australia
- Josh Kerwick: 'Team LGBTQ+ Comes 7th On Medal Tally In Queerest Olympics Ever', Star Observer
- The Project: 'Fair Play: Trans Inclusion in Netball', Channel 10
- Jacqueline Shields: 'Game On!', JOY 94.9
- Lauren Williamson: 'Campbell Harrison on overcoming obstacles, empowering queer athletes and why a good cry is key to resetting', Body + Soul Magazine

ADDITIONAL AWARDS ANNOUNCED ON THE NIGHT

- Sporting Organisation of the Year
- Community Sporting Organisation of the Year
- Most Improved Sporting Organisations
- Gold, Silver and Bronze tier Sporting Organisations

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ABOUT PRIDE IN SPORT

Pride in Sport is a national not-for-profit program that assists sporting organisations and clubs with the inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees, players, volunteers and spectators. It is part of ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs, which provides a range of services to employers, sporting organisations and service providers with support in all aspects of LGBTQ+ inclusion. All funds generated through membership and ticketed events go back into the work of Pride in Sport, actively working alongside sporting organisations, clubs and participants to make Australian sport inclusive of LGBTQ+ communities. For more information, visit the Pride Inclusion Programs website [here](#).

ABOUT THE PRIDE IN SPORT INDEX

The Pride in Sport Index (PSI) is an independently administered benchmarking system that provides the opportunity for all national and state sporting organisations to have their LGBTI related initiatives, programs and policies reviewed, measured and monitored. An initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Sports Commission and a legacy of the Bingham Cup Sydney 2014 (the world cup of gay rugby), it was developed alongside an advisory group that includes representatives from the National Rugby League (NRL), the Australian Football League (AFL), the Australian Rugby Union (ARU), Football Federation Australia (FFA), Cricket Australia, Swimming Australia, Water Polo Australia, Basketball Australia and Golf Australia. For more information, visit the Pride in Sport website [here](#).